

Chapter 7 – Parks, Recreation, & Public Facilities

The City of Pierre owns, operates, and maintains a number of buildings and facilities throughout the community. Among these are City Hall, 5 fire stations, a landfill, parks, street and utility maintenance shops, sewer treatment plant, golf pro shop, golf course, cemetery, public parking facilities, indoor aquatic center, outdoor swimming pool, library, water reservoirs, wells, lift stations, electric substations, concession buildings, public restrooms, auditorium, recreation facilities, a firearms range facility and the Pierre Regional Airport. In addition, the City leases out buildings for the Discovery Center, the Girls and Boys Club and the public transit service. The City maintains joint operation of the Solem Public Safety Center and the Expo Building. As plans are made to build, expand, or relocate public facilities, they should be done in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan and the Capital Improvement Program. Potential areas for cooperative efforts should continue to be explored with other public entities within the region.

Parks and Recreation Benefits

Parks, recreation and open space are essential elements to a community's quality of life. These facilities improve physical and mental health, create opportunities to develop and build community, add to community pride, and provide positive opportunities for leisure time. Leisure time opportunities are provided, in most cases, through the active and passive recreation sites, facilities and programs within a community's park system, and its recreation programs.

A well-planned program of parks, recreation programs and open space will enrich people's lives and will help to attract new residents and businesses by positively impacting tourism, real estate values, and land development patterns.

History of America's Parks

During the second half of the 19th century, American cities built grand city parks, such as New York's Central Park and San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, to improve their residents' quality of life. Public officials of the time saw these parks as a refuge from the crowds,

pollution, and stress where the public could experience fresh air, sunshine, and nature. In essence these parks functioned as a piece of the country with open space, fresh air, vegetation, and wildlife within the middle of an urban environment (Sherer 2006).

The country's park system fell into a state of decline as the population shifted to the suburbs following World War II. The decline of central city, property values and subsequent revenues decreased park funding and maintenance; making many city dwellers view places like Central Park as too dangerous or deteriorated to visit. The suburbs fared no better, as most were built with little public park space and people realized their backyards did not meet the requirement for public open space (Sherer 2006).

More recently, city parks have experienced something of a renaissance. This change has been linked to urban renewal, a strong economy, criticisms against automobile-oriented developments, and a shift away from the mid-20th century alienating and isolating architecture, in favor of public spaces that welcome and engage the community in general and the pedestrian in particular (Sherer 2006).

Public Health Benefits

The U.S. Surgeon General's comprehensive 1996 report found that people who engage in regular physical activity benefit from the following:

- Reduced risk of premature death;
- Reduced risk of coronary heart disease, hypertension, colon cancer, and non-insulin-dependent diabetes;
- Improved maintenance of muscle strength, joint structure, and joint function;
- Weight loss and favorable redistribution of body fat;
- Improved physical functioning in persons suffering from poor health;
- Healthier cardiovascular, respiratory, and endocrine systems (Center for Disease Control 1996).

Physical activity was also found to produce important psychological benefits, such as relieving symptoms of depression and anxiety, improving mood, and enhancing psychological well-being (Center for Disease Control 1996).

Despite the well-known benefits of physical activity, only 25% of American adults engage in recommended levels of activity and only 27% of students in grades 9-12 engage in moderate-to-extensive physical activity (Center for Disease Control 1996). Further research by the Center for Disease Control (2001) found the creation or enhanced access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6% increase in people exercising three or more days a week.

Economic Benefits of Parks

John Crompton, who has published extensive research on parks wrote, "The real estate market consistently demonstrates that many people are willing to pay a larger amount for a property located close to parks and open space areas than for a home that does not offer this amenity" (1999,1). In a follow-up report, Crompton (2000) reviewed 25 studies investigating the relationship between parks and open space and property values and concluded 20 resulted in such an increase.

A 2001 survey by the National Association of Realtors found 50% of respondents were willing to pay 10% more for a house near a park or open space. The survey also found 57% of respondents would be more likely to select one neighborhood over another if it was close to a park.

Parks can also serve as a city's identity and marketing tool to attract tourism, conventions and benefits. San Antonio's Riverwalk Park, constructed for \$425,000 has overtaken the Alamo as the most popular attraction for the city's \$3.5 billion tourism industry (Lewis 2002).

A real estate industry report calls neighborhood livability "a litmus test for determining the strength of real estate markets....If people want to live in a place, companies, stores, hotels, and apartments will follow" (ERE Yarmouth and Real Estate Research Corporation 1998, 15).

Access to Parks

There are many ways to measure existing park space in a community; the simplest is a per capita measurement. While popular, these park

measurements can be misleading since only park acreage is reported and not necessarily park access. When a region's parks are clustered together, some neighborhoods will enjoy easy access to open space, while others are nearly shut out (Trust for Public Land 2004).

Analyzing existing parks by their distribution and location to residential development is a more accurate method to judge park access for a community (Trust for Public Land 2004). History has proven that distance of a quarter-mile radius forms the near perfect place for people to interact (Figure 7.1); allowing people to reach most destinations in a five-minute walk (Burden 2001). This quarter-mile radius should be used as a measuring stick to analyze access to a community's public park system.

Figure 7.1. Illustration of a 5-minute walk radius for the Municipal Outdoor Pool.



Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities

The City of Pierre offers a variety of parks and recreational facilities:

- 11 parks
- 11 tennis courts
- Hillsview Municipal Golf Course
- beach volleyball court
- disc-golf course
- basketball courts
- horseshoe pits
- two swimming beaches
- indoor & outdoor swimming pools
- a band concert shell
- assortment of playground equipment
- fishing piers
- seven little league baseball fields
- two major league baseball fields
- pony league field
- eight softball fields
- eight soccer fields
- an outdoor skate park
- 3.5 miles of bike paths

Residents and visitors of Pierre have access to an outdoor pool and Oahe Family YMCA / Pierre Aquatic Center. The outdoor pool is open from June to August and is located in the downtown. The Aquatic Center features an eight lane, 25-yard pool, a water playground, an 85-foot water slide, one-meter diving board, sun bathing area and deck.

The City has six main parks and three smaller parks scattered throughout the City, which total 97.35 acres (Figures 7.2 and 7.3). All the city parks are irrigated, fertilized, aerated, sprayed for weeds, watered and mowed to keep the grasses flourishing. The following is a list of some of the facilities available at these parks and Table 7.1 provides the available facilities at the six main parks.

The Hillsview Municipal Golf Course is located two miles east of Pierre along State Highway 34 and adjacent to the Missouri River. This 175 acre 18-hole par-72 championship course is open to the public. Two

other courses are also located in the area, the Dunes Golf Course north of Fort Pierre and Oahe Trails Golf located at Lake Oahe.

The City Auditorium, located downtown, is utilized for a variety of recreational activities:

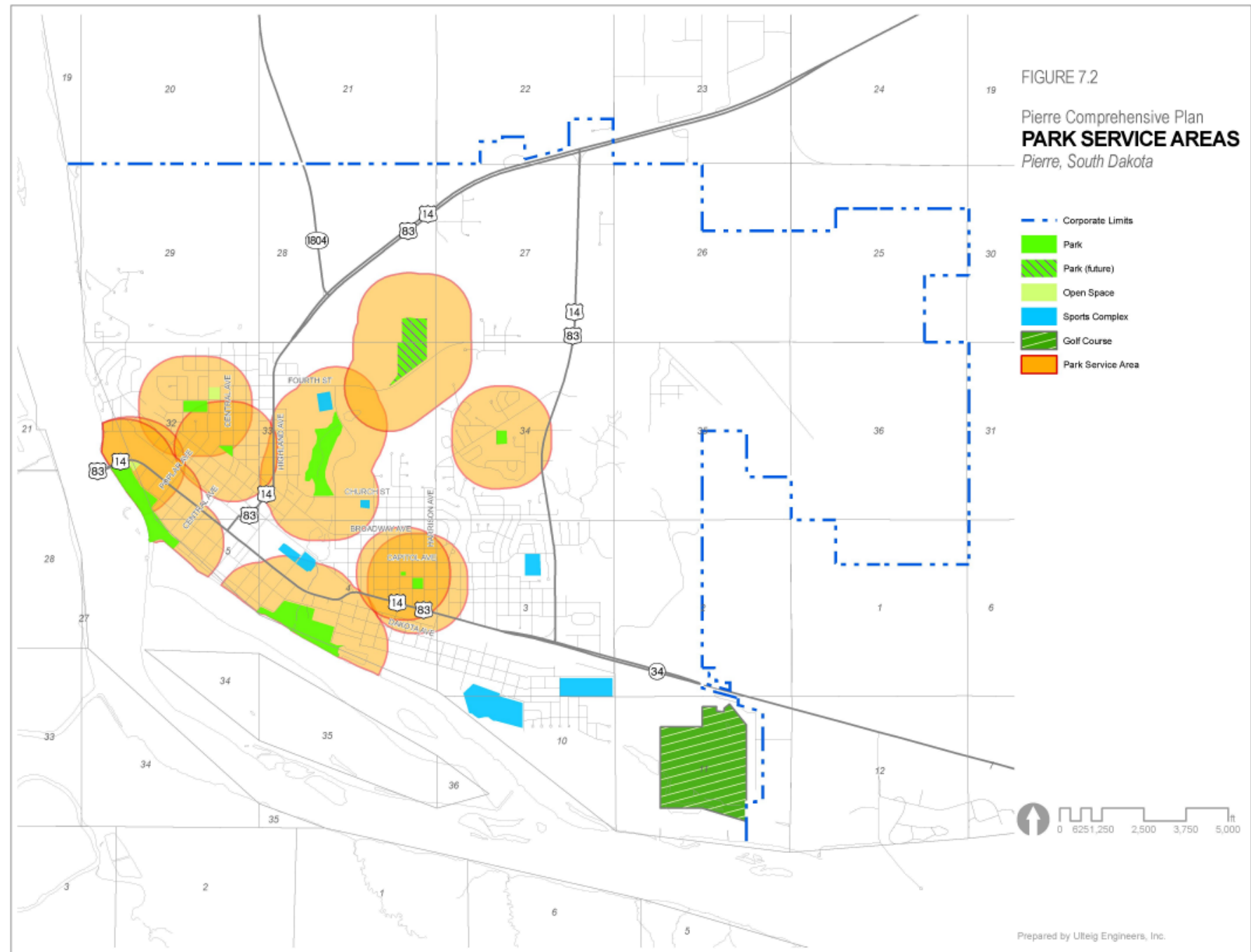
- Capitol Area Soccer Association
- the City Recreation program,
- How-Kota Archery,
- Lewis & Clark Rifle/Pistol Club,
- Men's Basketball league
- Tae-Kwon Do.

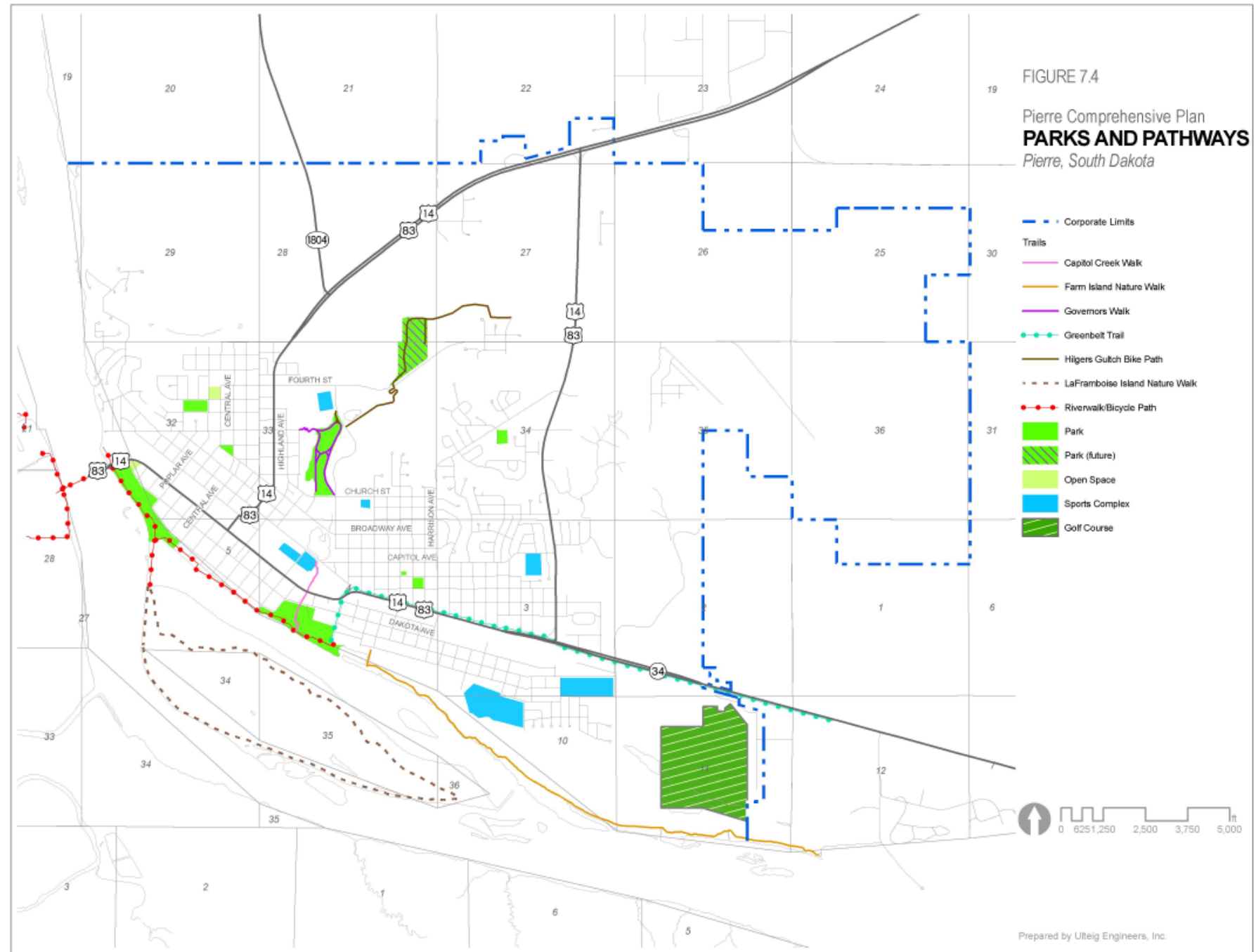
Table 7.1. Facilities available in Pierre's six main parks.

	Devine	Griffin	Harrison	Hilger's Gultch	LaBarge	Steamboat
Campgrounds		✓				
Restrooms	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Picnic Shelters	1	12				2
Playground	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Tennis Court		✓			✓	
Swimming		✓				
Beach						
Hiking/Walking Trails		✓		✓		✓
Horseshoe Pits		✓				
Historical Sites		✓		✓		✓
Disc Golf		✓				✓
Acres	1.9	33.6	2.6	28.5	4.75	26

The Park District also operates the Discovery Center, which provides a broad range of science and art workshops, programs and conferences for the youth and adults of the state. Participation in summer programs at the Center has grown steadily over the last four years with approximately 11,000 involved in the educational programs annually and nearly 8,500 exhibit hall visitors annually.

The Pierre Parks & Recreation Department also operates and maintains the Pierre Skate Park which is located in Griffin Park. The park offers a variety of ramps for bikes, skateboards and inline and accommodates all skill levels.





The Pierre area has a variety of multi-use trails which total over 50 miles. The main trails within Pierre include the Riverwalk/Bicycle path, the Greenbelt trail, the Capital Creek Walk, the Governors Walks, the Farm Island Nature Walk, and the LaFramboise Island Nature Walk (Figure 7.4). These trails total nearly 15 miles within the incorporated limits of Pierre.

In addition to the numerous facilities, residents can also participate in numerous recreational programs and activities. The programs vary by the season, skill level and age, such as: boys and girls club, youth and club soccer, archery, volleyball, football, hockey, basketball leagues, softball, tennis, pistol shooting, and baseball.

Parks and Recreation Analysis

As illustrated in Figure 7.2, the developed part of the City of Pierre has a strong array of public parks and open spaces for its citizens.

There is very little land available for infill development of residential uses. Therefore most of the new residential development will have to occur on the fringes of the City. There are few recreational facilities currently available in these future development areas of the city. The steep terrain in parts of the City creates natural green spaces because they are not practical to develop and are left as undeveloped land. The maximum utilization of these areas is a challenge because they do not lend themselves to accessibility or economical construction.

The potential changing demographic characteristics of the Pierre population suggests another challenge for parks, recreation and open space in Pierre. This is to provide activities and spaces which accommodate the needs and enhance the quality of life of elderly people. There are a wide range of potential activities which can be categorized as follows:

- Arts and crafts
- Educational and cultural
- Performing arts
- Socials
- Physical activities

Parks and recreational issues have been important topics of discussion by citizens, local government staff and leaders. In 2005, a Blue

Ribbon Panel evaluated the quality of life budget issues in the Pierre community with the objective of maintaining or enhancing the recreation and cultural activities. The Panel evaluated the operations and programs of the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as, considering the future recreational and cultural needs of the community. The recommendations pertaining to facilities have been incorporated into the recommendations section of this chapter.

The level of activity within parks and open space is another key measure of the effectiveness of these public facilities. While Pierre has an abundance of open space and park space, in some cases, it may be under utilized. Some of this underutilization may be due to the distance which equates to inaccessibility of the facilities. Other underutilization may be to the lack of certain characteristics within these areas such as:

- Lack of good places to sit
- Lack of gathering points
- Poor entrances and visually inaccessible spaces
- Dysfunctional features
- Paths that don't go where people want to go
- Domination of a space by automobiles
- Blank walls or dead zones around the edges of a place
- Nothing going on (Project for Public Spaces 2000).

It may be impossible to bring the parks to the people, however, it may be possible to bring people to the parks by key redevelopment initiatives such as those recommended for the downtown redevelopment of Pierre. It will be important to coordinate any changes to the parks system with redevelopment. Pierre has an excellent assortment of active park spaces such as soccer fields, baseball fields, etc. These often require large areas for parking and fields. There is an opportunity to develop more such spaces in the buyout area of southeast Pierre. Due to the nature of FEMA funding for the buyouts the area must remain undeveloped and therefore this area poses a challenge for best future utilization. The character of future flooding in this area will have a large impact on what kind of facilities may be appropriate to locate in the park. For instance, if there is the potential for damage from ice it may be that no permanent facilities of any type can be located in the area.

Parks and Recreation Recommendations

- Construct multi-use paths that parallel the proposed sewer mains along the linear greenway corridors in Sections 21, 22 & 27.
- When terrain and land use patterns make it practical, encourage neighborhood-scale parks or recreational areas within a five minute walk of all new residential neighborhoods.
- Provide off-street multi-use paths that link greenway corridor paths to neighborhood-scale parks.
- Require pedestrian oriented streetscapes and open spaces in the revised downtown commercial zoning district.
- Consider ongoing opportunities to expand the types of available facilities, such as a dog swimming/park area.

Blue Ribbon Recommendations

Short Term Recommendations

- Extend two existing softball fields to 310 feet to accommodate tournament play
- Repair auditorium
- Replace two tennis courts at Griffin Park.
- Carpet replacement at Discovery Center.
- Begin the initial planning of a 10 field soccer complex.

Intermediate Recommendations

- Construct a 10 field soccer complex.
- Plan for a multi-use facility to replace the function of the auditorium.
- Discuss/Plan for options for the outdoor pool
- Make Discovery Center Handicap Accessible.
- Explore expanding or building a clubhouse at the golf course.

Long Term Recommendations

- Build a multi-use facility to replace the function of the auditorium.
- Construct clubhouse or pro shop.

Parks and Recreation Goal

The City of Pierre will provide recreational facilities and open space to enhance the quality of life of its citizens and its visitors, and to enhance the image of Pierre as a great place to live, work and play.

Objectives:

1. Integrate park and open space areas into residential neighborhoods whenever feasible.
2. Encourage continued utilization of areas incompatible with other development activities for parks and open space.
3. Locate recreational facilities in areas that are compatible with the facility's use and surrounding uses.
4. Provide adequate vehicular access and parking facilities for recreation facilities which will generate significant traffic, with proper design for pedestrian access and safety.
5. Where feasible, encourage development of recreation areas adjacent to and for joint use with future school or other public facilities.
6. Expand the opportunities to partner with federal, state, local, and private funding sources to maximize the financial resources that can assist with establishing and maintaining recreational facilities.
7. Develop a park dedication ordinance to provide for fair and appropriate development of active and passive park space.
8. Implement the recommendations of the 2005 Blue Ribbon Panel Study.
9. Preserve and enhance the outstanding natural features of the City and surrounding areas.
10. Provide a mixture of both active and passive recreation facilities, suitable for use by all age groups, with due consideration for adequate access and parking safety.
11. Maintain the river greenway corridor for public use and protect it from encroachment by incompatible uses.
12. Preclude development of land which is environmentally unsuitable for construction by retaining floodplains, drainageways, and other significant natural areas as open space.

Fire Protection Facilities

The Pierre Fire Department (PFD) was organized in 1881 as a volunteer department and today is comprised of 66 volunteer firefighters. The department is organized into four engine companies and one aerial ladder company. From these home companies the department also staffs and supports a rescue squad, a rural fire department for rural and wild land fires, a dive rescue squad and a

hazmat response team. The City also maintains agreements with nearby fire departments such as Fort Pierre, Stanley County, Hughes County and Sully County to provide mutual aid. The department is led by a full-time chief, a volunteer deputy chief, and two volunteer assistant chiefs all of who are elected annually from the department at large. A full-time maintenance engineer handles maintenance tasks.

There are currently five fire stations in the city. Fire station number one is located in the central downtown area at 215 W. Dakota Avenue. Fire station number two is located in east central Pierre at 1415 Erskine Avenue. Station three is located in northwest Pierre at 721 North Poplar Avenue and station four is located at 802 N. Pierce in northeast Pierre. Fire station number five is located at the Pierre Regional Airport at 3920 Airport Road and includes vehicles and equipment for airport fire and rescue. The Hughes County rural fire department has an existing station location within the city limits near the Pierre Regional Airport.

While fire suppression facilities are only one aspect of an effective fire protection program, they are a major consideration in the City's Comprehensive Development Plan. The location of fire stations is critical in providing adequate fire response times to all areas of the city. Coordinating the fire protection plan with city growth through long-range land use planning will provide proper coverage with stations in key locations, and will maintain the City's fire insurance rating at the present level. The overall fire insurance rating is an important aspect of the local economy, as it affects premiums paid by all private property owners. The PFD currently carries a Class 3 ISO rating – the highest rating in the state shared only with Sioux Falls and Rapid City, the state's largest urban areas.

The effective service area of each fire station is assumed to be the area which is accessible by fire units within three to five minutes after an alarm. Street patterns, terrain and traffic barriers will affect the size and shape of this coverage zone. The ideal arrangement of fire stations will provide the most efficient fire response to the entire city with a minimum of service and duplication. As development of the City continues in a northerly direction, an additional station location may be needed in the general area of Sections 21 and 22. Locations for potential additional fire stations to serve new development should be based upon the following policies:

- Place stations at the outside edge of a service area, and travel inward towards the existing city development.
- Locate stations along major streets for better traffic access.
- Stations should have a one and one-half- to two-mile service area with a three to five minute response time.
- Build stations in conjunction with city park areas or other public neighborhood facilities.

Public Safety Facilities

The Pierre Police Department is comprised of 37 full-time and six part-time staff. The department is organized into administration, communication, patrol and detective divisions. The services provided are not just limited to routine calls for service, but also include crime prevention through community oriented policing, criminal investigation, accident investigation, routine and emergency 911 communications, traffic enforcement, animal control, training, and school and community resource services. The City also maintains agreements with nearby departments such as Stanley County and Hughes County to provide mutual aid. The department is led by the Chief of Police.

The police department is currently located at 3200 South Dakota Highway 34 along the southeastern boundary of city limits in the Solem Public Safety Center. The Center also houses the Hughes County Sheriff's Office, Hughes County Emergency Management and the South Dakota State Women's Prison.

A community must have a high level of safety to be considered a desirable place to live and work. Pierre is generally perceived as being a very safe place. The possibility that crime will increase as the City grows, however, is a concern shared by many residents. Effective delivery of police services is necessary to help maintain the city's relatively high level of safety now into the future.

Police protection is a service. The quality of that service depends upon maintaining sufficient staff, facilities and resources in the Police Department to be able to respond to the needs of the community. It is important that the police are able to respond in a timely manner to a call for assistance for the public. The number of criminal cases that

the department is responsible to investigate will also affect future staffing needs.

The Police Department needs to be located close to court facilities, the County Sheriff's Office, the county jail or other detention facilities, and close to customers. The police department facilities also need to accommodate the patrol officers and the investigators of the detective bureau operating in the same building, in close proximity to each other. Centralized management of the police department in a centralized headquarters facility is preferred over a dispersed precinct based system. The present base line measurement of service delivery is response time. The Pierre police are presently able to respond to emergency calls for assistance within three minutes. Maintenance of this average response time into the future is recommended.

As development of the City continues through the comprehensive planning period of 2020, the following are recommendations for providing police services to accommodate growth:

- Need for a new municipal law enforcement center and the potential for a shared facility with the Hughes County Sheriff's Office.
- Need to add 4 patrol officers, 4 dispatchers, 1 administrative staff person and 1 animal control officer when the new development nears the 500 mark.

- Need to add 1 patrol car and 1 unmarked investigator's car when the new development nears the 500 mark.
- Need for a new or improved shooting range for training and the potential need for a new site for the range

Public School Facilities

The Pierre School District has a newly remodeled high school, a newly remodeled middle school, and five elementary schools. The fall 2007 enrollment is 2593 for all grades. Based on enrollment projections and the \$20 million addition and renovation projects at the middle school and high school facilities, the school district's physical structures will easily handle the number of students enrolled in grades K through 12. The population is shifting to the northerly sections of the city which at some time in the next decade may justify building an elementary school in the northern part of the city. The School District will likely consider building a new elementary school in the area once the number of K-5 children in an approximately six to eight block radius of the proposed building site would justify the expenditure for a new building. Typical elementary schools are designed to accommodate about 400 to 500 students, so the school district would consider constructing a new building when the number of students in a newly developed area approaches 400. A compact and orderly pattern of urban growth and development would promote an efficient use of present and future public investments in school facilities. Potential sites should be located near collector or arterial roadways to provide adequate traffic handling and school spacing characteristics.